

We Are What We Ate

Hannah Bass looks at culinary inventions, past and present

50s

1951

The UK's first supermarket opens – Premier, in Streatham, London. Until then, customers queued to order at the grocery counter.



1953

The first frozen foods appear – but as only 15% of households own a fridge at the beginning of the 1950s, let alone a freezer, they're slow to take off.

4 July 1954

After 14 long, hungry years, wartime rationing finally comes to an end. The British menu is about to change for ever...

1954

The first UK Wimpy burger bar opens. McDonald's remains a distant, erm, dream?



1955

Birds Eye fish fingers arrive, promising 'no bones, no waste, no smell, no fuss'. They're still a firm favourite with busy mums today.



60s



1963

Mr Kuo, chef to the Chinese ambassador, defects from communism and sets up his own restaurant, introducing Peking Duck to delighted Londoners.



1961

Sliced bread...the best thing? The invention of the Chorleywood industrial baking process (which uses the cheaper, UK-grown, lower-protein wheat) makes the white sliced loaf possible.



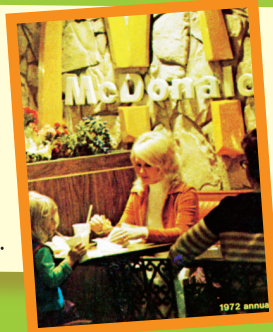
1960

The advent of air freight means tomatoes all year round, as well as avocados in Marks & Spencer for the very first time.

70s

1970

Nearly two-thirds of Britain's housewives go out to work: food is about to get a lot more convenient – by being canned, frozen and processed.



October 1974

McDonald's arrives from the US to supersize our diets – and (some of) our waistlines.



1974

The Magimix crosses the Chanel from France. Stylish hostesses serve mousses for every course, from salmon to chocolate.



1974

The first domestic microwave is sold. Now families can have a hot meal without even switching on the oven.

1979

The UK is home to 37 Iceland stores, a chain started by two former Woolworths employees. Two in five households now have a freezer.



1982

...and the following year aspartame-sweetened Diet Coke launches, tapping into a massive demand already established by sugar-free brands such as Coca-Cola's own Tab in the 60s and 70s.

1981

Artificial sweetener aspartame is approved for use in the US, sparking a controversy over its safety that rumbles on today.



1980

Marks & Spencer starts selling packaged sandwiches for the first time. By 1987, there are 25 varieties, with prawn mayo well established as the nation's favourite.



80s

90s

1992

The mini chain supermarket is born with Tesco Metro in London's Covent Garden.



1998

The first UK Starbucks opens. Brits get used to ordering a venti-skinny-double-shot-frappé-latte. Or something.

NOW

5 August 2013

The 'frankenburger' is made using meat grown from cow stem cells. Costing £250,000 to produce, it's also the most expensive burger in history.



Queens Of The Screen

Before Nigella's innuendo and Mary Berry's *Bake Off*, there were two pioneering women chefs who defined the decades...

FANNY CRADOCK was the face of the 1950s, wearing pearls and ball gowns as she concocted fantastical dishes such as meringue swans and potatoes dyed bright green. Then in 1969, the *Daily Mirror's* new magazine carried recipes from a relatively unknown cook: **DELIA SMITH**. She'd started out as a waitress, but before long was writing her own recipes. In 1971, she published *How To Cheat At Cooking* and then took her no-nonsense approach to the basics of cookery to the nation's TV screens. Fast-forward to the 21st century, and her books have now sold over 18 million copies.



So Bad They Were Good?

Guilty pleasures we loved to eat...

1961 Birds Eye introduces the **Arctic Roll**, selling a 25-mile length of the stuff a month.

1967 **Angel Delight** arrives. We're not sure how angelic, but strangely delightful, all the same.

1960s and 1970s We feast on **Fray Bentos** tinned pies, after **1974** accompanied by the miraculous **Smash** instant mashed potato.

1980s **Pot Noodle** and **Findus Crispy Pancakes** transform student life.

